

23rd January 2022: Jesus' manifesto

Greetings from the churches in Norwich
For them as they prepare for their minister's retirement
Open Doors at Ipswich Road
Will send your greetings and prayers to Wymondham

Today we are reflecting on Jesus manifesto - is a published declaration of the intentions, motives, or views of the issuer and thinking what that means for us as we seek to walk the way of Jesus.

Call to Worship

We are here to worship God

And to praise his holy name

We are here to hear his Word

And learn his purpose for our lives

We are here to share in the Good News of God's love

And commit ourselves to share it with others.

Worship the Lord your God

Praise his holy name!

373 Lord Jesus Christ

We Pray

(ask people to share along their row what want to say thank you for today)

Lord God,

we know that you are a generous God,

whose love overflows into this world.

You pour out on us wonderful gifts

and we have so much to thank you for.... (think of all the things you have shared and say thanks to God)

But most of all we thank you for the amazing gift of Jesus,
your most generous gift of all time.

He showed us clearly the depth of your love,

as he walked to his death in Jerusalem

to bring the gift of new life to us.

Lord, we confess before you that we have not followed our calling:

we have not served you as we should,

we have not cared for others as we should.

We fall short in so many ways,

putting ourselves above others.

We have come to say that we are sorry

and call to mind our shortcomings.

SILENCE

your forgiveness is ready ages before we seek it; your love is enfolding us long before we become aware of it. Fill us, we pray, with the peace that the world cannot give, and with the joy that no doubt, failure or fear can steal from us.

Because of the generosity of a loving God,

and the willingness of a loving Son,

our sins are forgiven. **Thanks be to God.**

Lord's Prayer

We read from God's word Luke 4:14-21

Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. He was teaching in their synagogues, and everyone praised him. He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners
and recovery of sight for the blind,
to set the oppressed free,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour."

Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. He began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

Spot the difference

Jesus is reading from the Bible
Do you know where from?
Scroll!

Yes he read from the scroll but what part of scripture?

Isaiah 61:1-2

The Sovereign Lord has filled me with his Spirit.
He has chosen me and sent me
To bring good news to the poor,
To heal the broken-hearted,
To announce release to captives
And freedom to those in prison.
He has sent me to proclaim
That the time has come
When the Lord will save his people
And defeat their enemies.
He has sent me to comfort all who mourn,

What is the difference between them?

Does it matter?

What stage is Jesus at?

How did he know his purpose?

Is this also our purpose? (more on that later)

We sing 576 God's Spirit is deep in my heart

"Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

"Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. He began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

Short sermon!

Imagine if that was it!

(actually goes on to say a bit more and the people begin wide eyed with wonder and end up chasing him out but that is for next week)

"Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

It's a very powerful sentence.

Jesus has read out his manifesto.

This is what he senses God has called him to do and to be.

Bring good news for the poor; freedom; healing; pronouncing the year of the Lord's favour.

What it tells me about Jesus is this

1: God is not just about words.

God has chosen to come in person to make a difference to the lives of his people. Isn't that amazing?

God had sent prophets and teachers but although people listened for a while they soon went back to their old ways, turning away from God.

"I'll do it myself" says God. Words aren't enough. I need to show them.

(reminds me of Eliza Doolittle's impassioned song in My Fair Lady – don't talk of love, show me!)

2: the Holy Spirit is here

It's the holy spirit that enables Jesus to stand in the middle of the synagogue and read from the bible and speak.

Something preachers know all too well! We are quite often nervous

Sometimes find the Word of God is fulfilled in your hearing through things we didn't think we had said. Holy Spirit enables each of us to receive in worship.

"Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

We should come out of worship as changed people!

Filled afresh with the Spirit and ready to work with God wherever we are called to be.

3: Jesus is not just about words.

God sends the Word, not just to talk but to act. We see in Jesus life and ministry the way that he brings good news for the poor, brings healing and freedom.

Can be easy to become blasé about Jesus ministry but it is awesome.

He talked to those who thought they were invisible. He touched those who society deemed unclean. He brought people in from the margins into the full light of the love of God. He released people from lives of misery and sin to know the freedom of loving God. It is immense.

And ends with death – and resurrection.

4: is this our purpose?

Yes! We are called to walk the way – to live the life of Jesus today.

Can seem daunting – don't feel equipped.

Don't know enough bible, not very good at praying, too old, too tired.

Well...

We have the Holy Spirit

We have the example of Jesus

And we have each other.

Not called into this alone – why we gather in congregations.

Another reading today is 1 Corinthians 12 – the body of Christ. It's a reminder that we need each other in order to fulfil our individual callings

Share a part of it from the Message

25-26 The way God designed our bodies is a model for understanding our lives together as a church: every part dependent on every other part, the parts we mention and the parts we don't, the parts we see and the parts we don't. If one part hurts, every other part is involved in the hurt, and in the healing. If one part flourishes, every other part enters into the exuberance.

27-31 You are Christ's body—that's who you are! You must never forget this. Only as you accept your part of that body does your "part" mean anything. You're familiar with some of the parts that God has formed in his church, which is his "body":

Makes me think about the Castellars of Catalan.



People working beautifully together. Besides the people who actually climb, many are also needed to form the base of the castell. They help sustain the weight and act as a sort of safety net. Of course they turn it into a competition which is not what we are about! Something engaging about this mad, multi-generational pastime. Shall we give it a go?

Earlier I said that these words are Jesus manifesto and asked if this is our purpose – what do you think?

Christ has no body but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which He looks
Compassion on this world,
Yours are the feet with which He walks to do good,
Yours are the hands, with which He blesses all the world.
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,
Yours are the eyes, you are His body.
Christ has no body now but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks
compassion on this world.

Christ has no body now on earth but yours. — St. Teresa of Ávila (attributed)

We sing 745 A new commandment

We Pray

Holy Jesus,

You call us into a life that others have told us is easy, but it is not.

You challenge us to forgive, to love our enemies,
to bless those who curse us.

We want the easy way,

but You have given us the hard path.
Grant us the patience and endurance to journey with You,
to allow ourselves at times to stumble,
to live into the hard way
so that we might fully experience Your love, grace and peace in this world,
by becoming a people full of love and grace and forgiving others

We are members of one body.
We rejoice in our diversity and the gifts that each person
in this fellowship brings to the body of Christ.

Lord God, when one is honoured,
we are all honoured.
We pray for those who lead our nation, our church and our communities...

When one is in need,
we are all in need.
We pray for those who are working for peace around the world...

When one suffers,
we all suffer.
We pray for those who seek your healing in our community...
We remember those who have died in faith, and those who are bereaved...

When one leaves us,
we are all bereft.
Help us to find ways to take up our cross, to live generously, to be aware of the needs of
others all across the world, to be part of building your kingdom here on earth
When one rejoices, we all rejoice.
Amen.

We sing 574 Go forth and tell

Blessing and Sending

Go out into the world in peace;
have courage; hold on to what is good;
return no one evil for evil;
strengthen the fainthearted;
support the weak;
help the suffering;
honour all people;
love and serve the Lord,
rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit ...
And may the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be with you now and
abide in you always